SLEMCO

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

POWER

WHERE COMMUNITY TAKES SHAPE



SLEMCO
POWER
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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cover photo by James Edmunds
Recently completed renovations of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Lafayette returned a brilliantly sparkling interior design that had not been seen in dozens of years.

SLEMCO



HONORING OUR 2026
SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Employee Milestones

EVERY YEAR OF SERVICE REFLECTS dedication, growth and a commitment to excellence. In 2026, SLEMCO proudly celebrates employees whose milestones represent an impressive 922 combined years of service. Their talent, teamwork and lasting contributions have strengthened our organization and continue to power our success.

5 YEARS

Kali Babineaux
Human Resources Supervisor
New Iberia

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Youngsville

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Lafayette

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VM Trimmer
Lafayette

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Meter Technician II
Youngsville

Whitney Woods
Dispatcher
Kaplan

10 YEARS

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Church Point

Kevin Guidry
Serviceman
Carencro

Gentry Laper
Operations Superintendent-VM
Carencro

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Rayne

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Breaux Bridge

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Lineman Class A
Washington

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31 Years
Breaux Bridge

Leston Cormier
37 Years
Morrow

Don Comeaux
35 Years
Lafayette

Joseph Fontenot
19 Years
Port Barre

Paul Guidry
38 Years
Abbeville

Brian Latiolais
35 Years
Church Point

Dwayne Latiolais
36 Years
Washington

Byron Smith
16 Years
Carencro

— 'TIS THE SEASON —

8 Ways to Keep Your Home Comfortable and Your Energy Bills Down

OUR SOUTHERN WINTERS MAY BE MILD, BUT COLD SNAPS, DAMP AIR AND FREQUENT TEMPERATURE SWINGS CAN STILL RAISE UTILITY BILLS



These targeted steps can help your home stay comfortable without wasting energy.

1 USE THE THERMOSTAT WISELY. Set it around 68°F when you are home and lower it when you are asleep or away. Avoid big temperature jumps. Heat pumps work best with small, steady adjustments.

2 MAKE THE MOST OF SUNNY DAYS. Open curtains on south-facing windows for free warmth, then close them after sunset. Run ceiling fans clockwise on low to move warm air down.

3 CONTROL HUMIDITY AND DRAFTS. Seal gaps around doors, windows, attic access and plumbing penetrations. Use exhaust fans during cooking and bathing, but turn them off promptly so they do not pull conditioned air outside.

4 MAINTAIN YOUR HEAT PUMP OR HVAC SYSTEM. Replace filters regularly, keep vents clear and schedule service if the system runs constantly, makes unusual sounds or struggles during a cold snap.

5 CUT STANDBY POWER AND LIGHTING COSTS. Turn off unused electronics, use smart power strips and choose LED bulbs and holiday lights, which use less electricity and add less heat indoors.

6 USE APPLIANCES EFFICIENTLY. Wash full loads in cold water, keep the oven door closed and use a slow cooker, microwave or air fryer for smaller meals when practical. *Lucky Number: 4501052603.*

7 PROTECT PIPES AND WATER HEATING. Insulate exposed pipes in crawl spaces, garages and exterior walls. If appropriate for your household, set the water heater to 120°F.

8 START WITH AN ENERGY ASSESSMENT. Check for uneven room temperatures, moisture, drafts and unusually high bills. A professional audit can help identify the upgrades most likely to pay off. *Lucky Number: 2216143001.*

Connect to a More Powerful Life

Life gets busy—especially this time of year. SmartHub makes it easier to manage your account information, view and pay your bill, monitor energy use, report outages or other service concerns and receive helpful notifications. Stay informed and ready for what's next. Don't have an account? Register at SLEMCO.com or download the app.

USE CANDLES DURING THE HOLIDAYS TO CREATE A WARM, FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE

Candles pose a fire hazard if left unattended or placed near decorations, curtains or other flammable materials. Always keep candles away from children and pets and never leave them burning unattended.

Consider using flameless LED candles for a safer, energy-conscious holiday glow.





All SLEMCO offices will be closed for holidays on the following dates.

JANUARY 1 – New Year's Day
FEBRUARY 9 – Mardi Gras
MARCH 26 – Good Friday
MAY 31 – Memorial Day
JULY 5 – Independence Day *Observed*
SEPTEMBER 6 – Labor Day
NOVEMBER 25 & 26 – Thanksgiving
DECEMBER 23 – Christmas Eve *Observed*
DECEMBER 24 – Christmas Day *Observed*
JANUARY 1, 2028 – New Year's Day



LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS!

FIND YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER AND WIN $100 CREDITS!

We've hidden 10 SLEMCO account numbers in this issue of the magazine. Look to see if you find your SLEMCO account number. If you do, call Michelle Courvelle at (337) 896-2504. Once she verifies you as a winner, she'll credit $100 to your SLEMCO account. *Lucky Number: 2027074502.*



story by and photos by
JAMES EDMUNDS

Built FOR MORE

Church construction, rebuilding and renovation showcase the vitality of community life in south Louisiana

Late in the construction phase, the new Our Lady of Wisdom Church and Catholic Student Center emerged as a prominent new feature of the campus.

THERE IS CROSSING THE STREET AND THEN THERE IS CROSSING THE STREET. This autumn, as students returned to campus for fall classes at the University of Louisiana, Our Lady of Wisdom Church and Catholic Student Center was in the midst of an epochal transition from the north side to the south side of campus artery St. Mary Boulevard. And it's not just a move to a bigger edifice, it's a leap from being quietly tucked behind one row of the university's fabled old oaks to soaring above another.

"Every aspect of the new church has been created with the mission of its campus ministry in mind," explains Mary Hernandez, Wisdom's Executive Director for Advancement. "A very visible entrance on St. Mary Blvd. welcomes all with a cafe and a place to relax or study. The spaces are more intentional as you move up and back. This includes spaces for our busy schedule of classes and study groups—we are the place of a very important four years of Catholic formation as young people prepare to take their places as adults in the world."

The new facility will be on former University of Louisiana property that came to the Lafayette Diocese as part of a complex swap and purchase involving space further along on St. Mary that the diocese had, and the university needed. "It was a win-win arrangement," Hernandez says, "but it did take quite a bit of time to complete because it involved two big institutions that each had to carefully fulfill their own responsibilities."

Adapting to the evolving needs of congregations is the force behind many church building and renovation projects. A case in point is the much-expanded St. Anne Catholic Church in Youngsville, a once sleepy Cajun hamlet that has experienced explosive growth in recent decades, but where many who live continue to cherish the history of the community. *Lucky Number: 4517748401.*

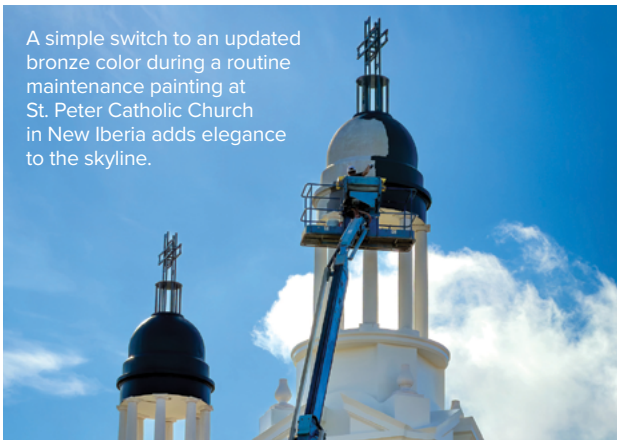
Local firm Gossen Architects delivered a stunning expansion of St. Anne by designing a new sanctuary of markedly increased capacity, all the while not just preserving, but echoing the historic church. Every aspect of the design honors the motifs of the prior



The side aisle at the newly expanded St. Anne Catholic Church in Youngsville.



Artisan monk providing careful maintenance at the temple complex at Wat Thammarattanaram in Iberia Parish.



A simple switch to an updated bronze color during a routine maintenance painting at St. Peter Catholic Church in New Iberia adds elegance to the skyline.

church, whose interior is being recaptured and made into chapel space.

"Although not new construction, another recent project that is noteworthy is the beautiful restoration of the Cathedral," observes Lynn Guidry, a Lafayette architect and historian who frequently offers insights on local architecture to his social media followers. The Cathedral has replaced a muted decor of recent decades with a restoration of the spectacular interior remembered by only its oldest parishioners. *Lucky Number: 4502379507.*

Even maintenance projects can enliven a congregation and community interest. St. Peter Catholic Church in New Iberia switched the color on its fabled cupolas to bronze when they were last repainted, giving the skyline a fresh new look.

> "...we are the place of a very important four years of Catholic formation as young people prepare to take their places as adults in the world."
>
> **MARY HERNANDEZ**
> *OUR LANDY OF WISDOM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ADVANCEMENT*

And a few miles away, with a different faith basis but the same principles in play, the Buddhist temple structures at Wat Thammarattanaram benefit from continual active care by the Lao-American community.

Sometimes a faith community is called upon to rebuild a church after tragedy, and the results can be inspirational. A quarter century ago, a terrible fire left only the scorched spire of First Baptist Church in Lafayette, and the energy with which the congregation rebuilt around that scarred relic echoes in that community today. And the aftermath of a string of 2019 arson attacks that destroyed several historically Black churches in rural St. Landry Parish, was that new churches have risen, quite literally, from the ashes, through the work and devotion of their congregations.

New church buildings, expansions, renovations, complete rebuilds after catastrophe—in every case, the inspiration is as Mary Hernandez describes it for the new Wisdom Church, creating spaces that fulfill a spiritual mission. *Lucky Number: 3432410000.*



When a fire destroyed almost all of Lafayette's First Baptist Church a couple of decades ago, congregants rescued the charred spire and built a robust new church that reflected the energy of that church community. *Lucky Number: 1044084008.*

— HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHT —

Celebrate the Season at St. Martinville's Christmas Tour *of* Homes



Old Castillo Boutique Hotel offers seven spacious, antique-furnished rooms with private baths and modern comforts.



THE ST. MARTINVILLE GARDEN CLUB invites the community to celebrate the holidays at its annual Christmas Tour of Homes on Sunday, December 6, 2026, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Tour headquarters will be at Maison de Tours Bistro, 128 South Main St. in St. Martinville.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Tour three beautifully decorated homes, then visit the Old Castillo Hotel to admire its painted wall murals, guest rooms and Christmas décor. Guests can also explore Steal Magnolias, where more than 20 vendors will showcase their offerings inside the historic Old Teche Theater building.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING & FESTIVITIES

Holiday shopping begins at 10:00 a.m., with nearly 40 vendors lining Evangeline Boulevard. Browse arts and crafts, food, candles, books, bath and body products, perfume, ornaments, woodworking, sweets and more. Collect initials from six vendor locations to enter a special vendor drawing, submit a completed tour ticket for the Tour Raffle and vote in the new "People's Choice" floral design competition at the Bistro.

TICKETS

Tickets are $10 and include admission to the featured homes, businesses and tour headquarters. Purchase advance tickets through December 3 at Company Salon, from any garden club member, or by calling Nessie at 337-288-6581 or Monique at 337-278-3235. Tickets will also be available at Maison de Tours Bistro on December 6.

MAKE A DAY OF IT

Enjoy refreshments, shop for one-of-a-kind gifts, tour festive homes and local businesses and leave St. Martinville filled with Christmas cheer. Come spend a fun-filled afternoon and pass a good time! *Lucky Number: 4518361703.*



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Mary A. Laurent — **Date** 09/8/2026
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PS Form 3526, July 2014

let's get COOKING



This month kicks off the holiday season and to inspire your family meals and festivities, we offer a taste of George Graham's cookbook ***Fresh From Louisiana: The Soul of Cajun and Creole Home Cooking***. Continuing his culinary journey with this second book, Graham has developed deeply personal and unique recipes that will have guests asking for more. The book is available at local bookstores for $40 (think Christmas gifts) or online. Also, check out his food blog at AcadianaTable.com.

Crawfish Dip in a French Bread Skillet

Wow factor and deliciousness come together.
Serves 8 to 12

- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup diced yellow onion
- ¼ cup diced green bell pepper
- ¼ cup diced red bell pepper
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup chopped mushrooms
- 1½ tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tbs. Cajun seasoning
- ½ cup dry sherry
- 2 tbs. sour cream
- ½ cup cream cheese
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 lb. Louisiana crawfish tail meat (shrimp or crabmeat can be substituted.)
- ½ tsp. cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Dash of hot sauce

BREAD

- All-purpose flour, for dusting
- 2 (11-oz.) cans refrigerated French bread dough, such as Pillsbury
- 4 tbs. unsalted butter melted
- Kosher salt
- 2 tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

DIP: In a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the onion, bell peppers, celery and mushrooms and sauté until the onion turns translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and Cajun seasoning, lower the heat to a simmer and stir to combine. Add the sherry and cook for 5 minutes. Add the sour cream and cream cheese and stir until the cheese melts and thickens. Add the cream and continue stirring until it becomes the consistency of a dip, about 5 minutes.

Add the crawfish tail meat; stir the mixture to combine. Simmer the mixture for 10 minutes. Add the cayenne and season to taste with salt, pepper and hot sauce. Keep warm for serving.

BREAD: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with nonstick spray. Sprinkle flour over a cutting board and remove the bread dough from the packages. Depending on the size of your skillet, cut the rolled dough into 12 to 14 equal segments of about 2½ inches. Roll on the cutting board with the palm of your hand until shaped into balls.

Add the dough balls along the perimeter of the prepared skillet, leaving a circular space in the middle. Brush the tops of the dough with the melted butter and place in the hot oven. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, brush with more butter and sprinkle with salt and the Parmesan cheese.

To serve, pour the hot crawfish dip into the hole in the middle of the French bread skillet. Serve family style, inviting guests to pull apart the bread and dip it into the hot dip.

Shrimp and Tasso Mac and Cheese with Cracklin' Crust

Well worth the break from tradition.
Serves 6 to 10

- 1 (16-oz.) package elbow macaroni
- 2 tbs. unsalted butter
- ½ cup diced yellow onion
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced green bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms (button or portobello)
- 1 cup chopped tasso or smoked ham
- 1 tbs. all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded fontina cheese
- 1 tsp. white pepper
- 1 tsp. hot sauce
- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. jumbo (16/20 count) shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 cup crushed pork cracklins or pork rinds

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the macaroni and cook according to the package directions. Strain the pasta and keep warm for later use.

In a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, add the butter. Once the butter is sizzling, add the onion, celery, bell pepper, mushrooms and tasso. Cook until the onions turn translucent and the mushrooms and tasso just begin to brown, about 8 minutes.

Sprinkle the mixture with the flour and add the milk and cream. Bring to a boil and lower the heat to a simmer. Add the cheeses and season with the white pepper, hot sauce and a pinch of salt to taste. Add the cooked macaroni to the skillet and stir into the mixture.

Once the mixture thickens, add the shrimp, distributing them evenly throughout the skillet. Sprinkle over the crushed pork cracklins and move the skillet to the hot oven. Bake just until the mixture begins to bubble and the top begins to brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve immediately.



Raspberry Trifle

Serves 4

- 1 large store-bought sponge cake, thickly sliced
- 6 tbs. Grand Marnier liqueur, divided
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 (14-oz.) package madeleine cookies
- 2 ½ cups crema or whipped cream
- 2 tbs. sugar
- 2 cups fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup freshly grated bittersweet chocolate
- Sprig of fresh mint

In a decorative glass trifle bowl, line the bottom with thick slices of sponge cake to come halfway up the side of the vessel. Drizzle the cake slices with ¼ cup of the liqueur and the orange juice.

Place the madeleine cookies along the edge of the glass bowl with the shell-shaped side facing outward.

In a small mixing bowl, stir together the crema, sugar and remaining 2 tablespoons liqueur. Pour 2 cups of the crema into the center of the trifle bowl.

Arrange the raspberries on the top of the crema and garnish with the remaining ½ cup crema. Sift over the grated chocolate and garnish with a sprig of mint. Chill for 1 hour and serve.

For extra copies of these recipes or to email a copy to a friend, visit SLEMCO POWER magazine at SLEMCO.com.

Celebrate the Holidays IN ACADIANA

SAT, NOV 28 / OPELOUSAS / HOLIDAY FÊTE & NATIVITY LIGHTING 2–7 PM (nativity unveiling at dusk) Downtown St. Landry Parish Courthouse Square. Holiday music, arts and crafts vendors, food, drinks, children's activities (train rides, photos with Santa) and the official unveiling of the historic downtown nativity scene.

SUN, NOV 29 LOUISIANA CHRISTMAS DAY 6 PM. Bayou Teche Music Productions presents the fifth-anniversary gala featuring internationally acclaimed bass-baritone André Courville and the Atchafalaya Orchestra. Special guests include Sweet Cecilia, Wayne Toups, Chubby Carrier, Jennifer Kaye, Jourdan Thibodeaux and Hunter Courville. Heymann Center (337) 291-5555. Prices vary, see website for details heymanncenter.com

NOV 30 - DEC 31 / NEW IBERIA / VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS AT RIP VAN WINKLE GARDENS 9 AM to 5 PM daily. Tour the Joseph Jefferson home with its Victorian-inspired holiday decorations. 505 Rip Van Winkle Rd. (337) 359-8525. ripvanwinklegardens.com

DEC 1, DEC 4 CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT presented by Chorale Acadienne. 7 PM at St. Mary Catholic Church. Two evenings of holiday music and fellowship. Tickets available at door or online. $25 general admission, $20 seniors 65+, $10 students. 419 Doucet Road, Lafayette. (337) 349-5342. choraleacadienne.com/tickets

THU, DEC 3 / A CAJUN NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS presented by Acadiana Symphony Orchestra & Conservatory of Music. 7 PM. This family-friendly performance blends familiar melodies with the culture, humor and charm of Acadiana. Heymann Center, (337) 291-5555. heymanncenter.com

THU, DEC 3 LAFAYETTE FARMERS & ARTISANS CHRISTMAS MARKET at Moncus Park. 4 to 8 PM Shopping, food, drinks, Santa and more! moncuspark.org/christmasmarket

FRI, DEC 7 / FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS presented by Oil Center Association. 5:30 to 9 PM. Oil Center, Lafayette. Santa and sleigh lighting on Ochsner's skywalk 6 PM. Over 250 lighted displays, Santa, shopping, food, family freindly activities. Free holiday-caroling trolleys. (337) 232-1267. theoilcenter.com

SAT, DEC 5 / BROUSSARD / NOËL À BROUSSARD 3-7 PM. Parade begins 3 PM at Morgan Avenue and Albertson Parkway, ends at Arceneaux Park. Gather after at Broussard City Hall for reindeer games, face painting, balloon artistry, Papa Noël's Market and the annual community Christmas tree lighting at 6:30 PM. (337) 837-6001. broussardchamber.net

SAT, DEC 5 / CARENCRO / OLDE-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS NIGHTTIME PARADE Festivities and parade begin at 5:30 PM. Downtown. Holiday lights and seasonal activities surrounding the evening celebration. Celebrate with us. carencro.org

SUN, DEC 6 SONIC CHRISTMAS PARADE 1 PM, Lafayette. Annual parade marks the official arrival of Santa in Acadiana. Jefferson Street to the Oil Center. Kids bring letters for Santa to be mailed. After-party in Parc International right after parade. Holiday music, family activities, photos with Santa.

SUN, DEC 6 / ST. MARTINVILLE / CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES presented by St. Martinville Garden Club. 1–5 PM. Annual tour showcasing local historic and modern homes, and two local businesses. Holiday shopping and festivities begin 10 AM. **See page 6 for details and tickets!*

DEC 7–29 NOËL ACADIEN AU VILLAGE presented by LARC. 5:30 to 9 PM at Acadian Village. This 23-night Christmas festival supports LARC, a local nonprofit serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Half a million lights, live entertainment, carnival rides, photos with Santa, holiday shopping. Tickets $10 at area ShopRite locations, online $11 plus fee. Gate admission $12. Children age 2 and younger FREE. (337) 981-2364. acadianvillage.org.

DEC 8–20 / OLD-TIME WINTER TRADITIONS at Vermilionville Living History Museum & Folklife Park. 10 AM to 4 PM. Experience old-time Acadiana holiday traditions, candle making, natural decorating, soap making and writing letters to Papa Noël. Dine at La Cuisine de Maman from 11 AM to 2 PM. Shop local gifts at La Boutique. (337) 233-4077. bayouvermiliondistrict.org

THU, DEC 10 / OPELOUSAS / CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARADE 6 PM (line-up from 3:30 PM–5 PM) Route begins at East Landry and Academy Streets, ends at Landry and Bullard Streets. Holiday floats, marching bands, school groups, dance teams, costumed characters, plus Santa and Mrs. Claus. *Lucky Number: 3432143000.*

SAT, DEC 12 / NEW IBERIA / QUEEN CITY CHRISTMAS PARADE begins 5:30 PM. Downtown historic Main Street, from Lee Street to Jefferson Street. 100,000+ lights. Christmas floats, dance schools and bands. (337) 207-5670. iberiatravel.com

SAT, DEC 12 / BREAUX BRIDGE / CHRISTMAS ARTWALK 3–8 PM. Historic downtown. Holiday market with 70+ vendors (local artists and makers, art, pottery, jewelry, woodwork, leather goods, sculpture, specialty bakers and prepared food). Local dining, live music with Rhythm and Roots. Pictures with Santa, late-night open doors for downtown merchants and galleries. breauxbridgeartwalk.com

SAT, SUN, DEC 12–13 / THE NUTCRACKER presented by Lafayette Ballet Theatre. 7 PM. Two-act classical ballet features LBT's professional company dancers, principal guest artists from Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle and more than 130 local dancers. At the Heymann Center, (337) 291-5555. Prices vary, visit heymanncenter.com

SUN, DEC 13 / DELCAMBRE / MAIN STREET CHRISTMAS PARADE 2-4 PM. Join us for the Candyland Christmas parade featuring Santa Claus, marching bands and dance groups. Holiday market featuring local vendors. (337) 517-2133. *Lucky Number: 3415220000.*

SUN, DEC 13 / SOUNDS OF THE SEASON presented by The Lafayette Concert Band 3:30-5 PM at Lafayette High School (Scotty Walker Concert Hall). FREE, open to the public. (337) 654-3642, windband@gmail.com

DEC 18–20 CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK presented by First Horizon Bank. Three nights of holiday magic at Moncus Park. 6 to 9 PM nightly. Live music, food trucks, free kids activities, free snow sledding, movie night, photos with Santa and a holiday market. Free parking with shuttles from Blackham Coliseum. See the full entertainment lineup at moncuspark.org/Christmas.

SAT, DEC 19 / THE CREOLE NUTCRACKER 7 PM at the Heymann Center. This 19th-century fairy tale gets a Louisiana twist, immersing audiences in the food, language and music of Creole culture. Tickets at heymanncenter.com

WED, DEC 23 / MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER CHRISTMAS presented by Broadway of Lafayette. 7:30 PM. Heymann Center. Grammy Award winner Chip Davis brings Mannheim Steamroller's holiday classics. Featuring 15 musicians playing more than 20 instruments celebrating the season.

NOV 21 - DEC 23 CHRISTMAS AT BRIDGE POINT FARMS drive-through Christmas light display, presented by Unitech Training Academy Tues–Sun 6–10 PM, closed Mondays. 115 Enterprise Blvd, Lafayette. $25 per car or truck, $40 per van, $100 per bus or trolley. Advance tickets available online at bridgepointfarms.com

THU, DEC 31 29TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S NOON CARNIVAL AND COUNTDOWN presented by Children's Museum of Acadiana. 10 AM to 2 PM. Families welcome 2027 with confetti countdown (indoor and outdoor confetti blasts). Live music, stilt-walking performance, games and prizes, party favors, hands-on activities. $16 per person, CMA members half-off, 12 months and under FREE. (337) 232-8500. cmalaf.org